

East Coast



Greenway.
ALLIANCE

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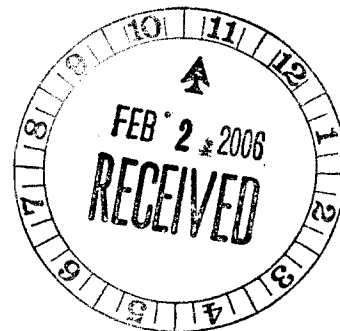
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Karen M. Votava

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January 26, 2006

Mr. Vernon Williams
Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
1925 NW K Street
Washington, DC 20423

Janet
Public Record

Re: Jersey City -- Petition for a Declaratory Order, STB Finance Docket 34818

Dear Secretary:

The East Coast Greenway Alliance supports the petition by the City of Jersey City and the Embankment Preservation Coalition, identified by the above Docket Number.


The Alliance is a national nonprofit membership organization, incorporated in New York State, with headquarters in Wakefield, Rhode Island, and members concentrated along the Eastern Seaboard. Working with states, counties, municipalities, and nonprofit groups and individuals, we are creating a 2950-mile long multi-use urban spine trail system that will link cities from Maine to Florida and provide a safe, green, traffic-free arterial route for recreational use and muscle-powered travel.

Our organization was a partner with the New Jersey Department of Transportation in a 2003 study to extend the existing segment of the trail through the major cities of Newark and Jersey City. We were delighted the study identified rail corridors that would accommodate our trail through this densely populated and built-out area of the state. One of these corridors is the Pennsylvania Railroad Harsimus Branch. The ECGA designated the section from Marin Boulevard (formerly Henderson Street) to Newark Avenue, Jersey City, as part of the greenway spine route. Indeed, the Harsimus Branch location near the Hudson River and its historic Embankment structure will make it the "Gateway" to New Jersey from New York and a notable destination on our trail.

Our organization has followed the efforts of the City of Jersey City and the Embankment Preservation Coalition to clarify the abandonment status of the Harsimus Branch and to acquire the Embankment property for public use for light rail, greenway, and open space. As trail advocates, we are aware of the support afforded by federal railroad abandonment law for rail corridor

to circumvent these regulations. We urge you to exercise your jurisdiction in this matter and enforce remedies under federal law to preserve this important transportation corridor. Please include this letter as part of the record of the proceeding. I have served the representatives of parties by US Mail, as indicated below

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Karen M. Votava".

Ms. Karen Votava
Executive Director

cc. Jonathan Broder, VP and GC
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Philadelphia, PA 19103

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